

***C.A. Thayer* Stop**

#4 Good Wood: Preserving Ships and Forests

You're listening to "Maritime Voices" from San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. I'm ranger Mark Neuweld. In this episode, we'll consider the natural and cultural treasures that the National Park Service preserves.

On foggy, damp San Francisco mornings, I like to go down into the cargo hold of the *C.A. Thayer*, put my hands on wood that is centuries old, and think about its history. At the center of the *C.A. Thayer* are massive beams of Douglas-fir. This wood, like the many loads of Douglas-fir that *Thayer* carried to San Francisco, came from old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest. This wood came from a tree reaching hundreds of feet to the sky that witnessed hundreds of years of foggy, damp mornings.

What is the value of a tree and a forest? In the Pacific Northwest, an old-growth forest is home for spotted owls and northern goshawks. A massive tree might be the only one in an area with branches wide enough to hold the egg of a marbled murrelet. A group of trees work together to anchor the soil. They filter the air, absorbing carbon dioxide and safely storing it in their woody tissue. Over a century ago, many old-growth trees were harvested to build the Victorian homes of San Francisco, providing shelter for families to gather around warm fireplaces through the cold, wet nights of winter. What is the value of a tree? In our choices and actions, we answer this question everyday.

The National Park Service now preserves old-growth forests of the Northwest, and it also preserves historic ships. Over the past half-century, the *C.A. Thayer* has served as an overnight home for thousands of children involved in educational programs. *Thayer* has also witnessed monthly gatherings of music lovers coming together to sing traditional maritime songs. More than a hundred voices would fill her cargo hold with chanties evoking the humor, sadness, and longing of the men and women who lived and worked on the sea. Today, the forest communities of the Northwest are alive with the songs of birds and mammals. On this day, the *Thayer* is also alive with musical echoes resounding with a love for ships and the sea. This love has kept the *Thayer* afloat for more than a century. Take a moment to listen to the music.